3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

while the ladies were already tucking into the liberal helpings of bread and mutton handed round by D. and Ahmad Bakhsh, washed down by bowl after bowl of tea rich with sugar and the milk of yaks. Some of them had brought special contributions to the feast in the shape of strange fried pastries, which they shared with their friends. One good lady from Chopkana amused us by unfolding a large handkerchief full of a kind of small fried buns; the others were about to fall upon it, when she snatched it up and said, pointing to the men's party, "No! This is for the *other* guests!" So the fried buns were borne off in triumph for the men, to the delight of the proud donor. When all was finished except the titbits which some of the ladies tied up in their red handkerchiefs for the children they had left at home, photographs were taken and the women adjourned in a body to D's. tent for medicines and initiation into the mysteries of the toilet-table. The men, after cigarettes and a suitable interval for digestion, spent an uproarious evening running wheel-barrow and three-legged races, cockfighting and competing in various other novel sports.

The marriage customs of the Kirghiz inhabiting these remote and secluded valleys of the Kashgar Range differ in some respects from those described by previous writers in connexion with the less isolated and therefore probably less primitive Kirghiz of Russian Central Asia. It may therefore be of interest to record the information I obtained regarding them, both at Kaying and at the wedding party which, as already described, we attended in the upper Qaratash valley the previous April. The position as regards marriage among these mountain people is exactly the reverse of that found among the Turkis of the plains. At Kashgar women are at a discount, wives are cheap and divorce even cheaper. Among the Kirghiz, on the other hand, girls are at a premium and a would-be bridegroom or his father has to pay a heavy bride-price, which usually varies between ten and thirty yaks or their equivalent in other kinds of live stock. Ordinarily, when a boy has reached the age of six or seven and may therefore be expected to survive till manhood (infant mortality is no lower among the Kirghiz than it is among the Turkis) his parents betroth him to some neighbour's daughter of about the same age. This transaction, known as the *qalam*, is usually the result of long haggling about the bride-price, in which the female relatives of both parties play a leading part. Suppose

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

584 the price is fixed at ten yaks; the boy's father pays a first annual instalment of one yak, the girl's father gives the boy in return a shirt or a coat as a token of the betrothal, and the *qalam* is complete. It may, however, be broken off at 585 any time before the *nikah* by mutual consent, in which case the instalments paid are refunded. When all the yaks have been paid and the young couple have reached the ages of, say, fourteen and sixteen years respectively, the bride's people invite all the neighbours to a feast at which the marriage is announced. The bride and bridegroom do not attend this "wedding breakfast," remaining in their tents in the background all day. The 591 feast and announcement, known as the *nikah*, constitute the wedding, there being no other ceremony. The bridegroom, 585 however, cannot yet take his bride away to his own home. She continues to live for a period varying from two to five months with her parents, during which time the latter make and furnish an *aq-oi* with its felts, rugs, wall-hangings, screens, pots, pans, cushions, milk-bowls and other appurtenances complete for the young people. During this period the bridegroom lives at his own home if near, otherwise in an *aq-oi* lent him by the bride's parents, and visits the bride every week or ten days. These visits are supposed to be kept secret from her father, who must not see the bridegroom entering or leaving the bride's tent. During the whole of this period the bridegroom must never appear before his father-in-law unless he is wearing his caps and boots and has his stick in his hand, as if he were a stranger from afar. At this stage if the bride is unfaithful (but not otherwise) the bridegroom's father can demand the price back and break off the match. When the *aq-oi* is finished, the bridegroom takes it and the bride away to his own place, on which occasion some show of resistance is made by the girl's relations—an obvious survival of the marriage by capture idea. After a year (not before) the wife can "give a divorce" to her husband by returning him the price paid for her—exactly the reverse of what happens in the plains, where it is the husband who (if he likes) "gives" a divorce to his wife.

600 At last the time came to bid the Happy Valley and our Kirghiz friends a sad farewell; for we did not expect to be able to visit it again the following year before going down the road to India, as we eventually did. We did not, however, return to the plains by the way we had come. Old Samsaq Bai, the Kirghiz who had come to our rescue on the way up and

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

Ramazan fast, and at Qurban, the schoolmaster receives two tengas. During the winter months each child brings one stick of firewood, as well as one *dachin* as its contribution to the expense of papering the windows of the schoolroom; most of these "perks" are retained by the schoolmaster. The "teaching" consists merely in making the children sing the lesson over and over again at the top of their voices, all together, until it is known by heart; the more noise a school makes, the higher the reputation of the schoolmaster.

The conditions of the "marriage market" and many of the matrimonial customs of the Eastern Turkis differ widely from those obtaining among the Kirghiz of the mountains, described in Chapter XI above. Instead of being at a premium, women are at a discount and no bride-price is paid. For a man, marriage is easy and cheap, and divorce even easier and cheaper. Among the agricultural classes, which form the large majority of the population, a man has seldom more than one wife at a time; but in the cities many men have at least two, always, be it noted, living in different towns or in different quarters of the same town. The harem system is unknown and would be impossible in Kashgar, owing to the quarrelsomeness of the women. The marriage age for girls is 12–14, for boys 15–16. The matches are always arranged between the respective parents, the wishes of the young people not being consulted. D. noticed at Kashgar that there was a great deal of rivalry among mothers about getting their daughters married off at the earliest possible age; even among the children themselves, a girl who reaches the age of fourteen without a husband is unmercifully chaffed by her companions. On the other hand, the Indian custom of not allowing a boy to see his fiancée until the wedding-day does not exist in Chinese Turkistan; the children have often known and played with each other for years.

A certain amount of ceremony and importance attaches to a girl's first *toi* or marriage. Her parents give a party to all the neighbours; the *imam* and *mu'azzin* are again present, and the bride and bridegroom eat together bread dipped in salt and water. Food and money are also given to the beggars and fees to the mullas; the bride receives a trousseau of clothes, jewellery and household utensils (*toiluk*), the bridegroom a coat and a pair of boots. The total expenses of a

563 "chief-elder". The charismatic character of such an elder is of
622 prime importance. His wealth, his public influence, his reputa-
[554] tion, his military ability and his moral integrity form the basis of his social status.

692 Internal order is maintained by unwritten common law. Judges
563 act by custom and conscience alone. When a cause of action arises,
671 the litigants, in lieu of blood-vengeance, agree to refer the matter to a court of their own choosing and to abive by its decision. Either both sides agree on one or two bäks to settle the case, or each selects a bäk, and a third man is chosen as arbiter. Civil and
[674] criminal law are not distinguished. Crimes are really torts, and
[681] can be settled out of court by compromise. Hence, the criminal is not punished; he simply pays damages, which represent a sort of compounding of the earlier lex talionis. Custom prescribes a
681 graded schedule of damages, ranging from a wergild (kun) of 100
563 horses, 1000 sheep, or 50 camels for homicide, through lesser payments in cattle for adultery, fraud, and serious personal injuries or assault, to a horse and a robe or skin for slander, breaking a finger or tooth, and minor assaults. The full wergild must be paid for killing a man, one-half for a woman or slave, and one-third for a child under ten. The circumstances and intent are not considered. However, a man pays no penalty for killing his child, slave or adulterous wife. For cattle theft, a man must restore the stolen animals and, in addition, pay twice their number as damages. For rape of an unbetrothed girl he must marry the girl, give her father the usual bride-price, and pay him a fine of nine head of cattle.

563 Usually before a boy reaches the age of ten, his father seeks
584 a wife for him. Neither the boy nor the girl has much voice in
[614] the transaction. Since the nomadic Turks practice strict clan exogamy the boy's father must select a girl of suitable qualifications from another clan. He then sends matchmakers to her
563 father to arrange the bride-price "kalym". Except where a
583 brother and sister are married by exchange to a sister and
584 brother, marriage is always by purchase. The bride-price, payable in horses, cattle, sheep and camels, varies with the means of the groom and the desirability of the bride, forty animals representing perhaps an average kalym. In return, the bride takes with her from her father's home a dowry, much inferior in value, consisting usually of a yurt, a riding horse or other animals, a chest of clothing, rugs, beddings, and other house-
[582] hold articles. Marriage is deferred until the children attain
[884] their majority.

/The New Uighurs/

563 The Sinkiang nomad must buy his bride
[184] with a bride-price, but the sedentary Sinkiang bride is given
[583] away by her father. In addition he even pays all wedding ex-
penses. Marriages are arranged by a "go-between", who usu-
[584] ally occupies a higher social position than either the bride or
[586] groom's families. As in all Moslem communities, divorce is
a relative simple matter for the male. Therefore, a consid-
[589] erable number of women without family attachments are present
in all Uighur communities. These unattached women are usu-
ally engaged in employment as tailors, cooks, or weavers, and
thereby form a distinct social unit. As a rule they are identi-
fied with the household of their employer.

563 In general, all Uighurs are individualistic in character.
621 However, the structure of the community with its irrigational
182 problems gives them a collectivist outlook on life in parts.
[181] The families that form such an Uighur community are by no
means bound together by kinship obligations. Their communal
cooperation rests exclusively on the fact that without collective
effort and labor the community would perish.

563 Prior to 1949, no organized youth groups existed in Uighur
[561] communities, since in any Islamic community the male child
begins to participate in the activities centered around the
mosque at a very early age. All other youth groups were dis-
[585] couraged. The young Uighur man becomes a full member of
[885] the community at the time of his marriage. He will receive
title to any land or water rights only upon the decease of the
eldest male member of his family. Until then both he and his
wife work as members of the extended family group. A young
merchant usually will act as his father's representative until
the father's retirement from business affairs or his death.

563 Merchants are bound together in "guilds". However, these
441 associations are not official institutions but were natural out-
growths of the merchants' self-protecting interests. Should
any member of the community be guilty of not paying his debts,
he will be prosecuted by the members of such a "guild", even
though he may have moved to another community. In each
locality or city, the merchant's "guild" is organized under the
leadership of an aqsaqal, who functions as a public official.

563 Individuals of the Uighur community who do not inherit any
166 land, move to non-irrigated areas which nevertheless show
241 possibilities of being irrigable. These new irrigation pro-
425 jects are usually undertaken as the collective effort of several
families who move as a group to such a new area. This prac-
tice may explain population increases in Uighur occupied
areas.

563 New industries and the further development of natural
178 resources may have some influence upon Uighur social struc-
ture, since these factors increase the wealth of both the

/Sedentary Moslems of Sinkiang/

593 permission of her husband. This is unheard of among orthodox
562 Moslems. These few incidents are indicative of the general
563 attitude in Sinkiang to women and the place they occupy in society and in their families.

563 The father-son relationship is very important, particularly
593 when the son has not yet established a home for himself and is living at his father's house. The father initiates his son in a trade
[868] and provides a wife for him. In most cases the father provides
[584] his son with a strip of land or some property after he is married
[425] to start him in life. After his father's death, the son inherits his
[428] property, and his prestige and social status (if he has any). How-
[101] ever, the relationships of father-son is not as seriously regarded as it is in China, where it carries such an immense value. The son does not always stay with his father. In some cases of divorce,
[586] it may be agreed that the mother will take care of the son, in which even the son is subject to his mother's influence. Otherwise, the mother-son relationship is not as important as that of the father-son. The mother's influence on her son's life is not as significant as it is on the daughter.

The father-daughter relationship is much looser. The father has much less contact with his daughter than with his son. He is mainly interested in marrying her off and making some profit out of the marriage deal. If he is an orthodox Moslem he may hardly
[582] see her at all, the custom being that men eat separately. The daughter leaves home at a very early age (twelve to fourteen)to get married, and if she is not divorced, her father is likely to see her very few times after she has left home.

The mother-daughter relationship is closer and warmer. Both stay home, and the mother's duty is to teach her daughter household duties and social manners. Mother and daughter are likely to maintain a fairly close relationship even after the daughter's
[586] marriage. In general, in cases of divorce, the father will keep the sons and the mother will keep the daughters, and the small children who are nursing. Exceptions do occur where the mother keeps all the children, or the father agrees to take care of a daughter. The arrangements depend on the agreement reached between the parents, and on their economic conditions.

Primarily as a result of the unstable family conditions, the relationship between brothers is the loosest of the family ties. In many cases brothers may not be full brothers, but may have a different mother or a different father. In the lower classes, brothers often go to seek fortune in a different town or a different section of town, and lose complete contact with each other. Fortune, wealth, and social status may also put gaps between brothers. They generally do not know each other very well and lose complete contact after their own marriages. Brother-sister relationships hardly ever attain a close association. The girls leave home at an

563
548 /Sedentary Moslems of Sinkiang/

Prostitution is not widespread among the Moslem Turks, and in many places it is hardly known. Travellers who are separated
[588] from their wives often will contract temporary marriages when they are in strange towns for a length of time. At the time that this marriage is contracted, a future divorce is written also. There are, however, quite a few Chinese prostitutes in the main cities where the Chinese reside in great numbers.

563
582 B. Marriage and Divorce Customs

Among the Moslem Turks of Northwest China the marriage age is usually 12-14 for girls, and 15-16 for boys. The Islamic religion considers incestuous such combinations as the following: brother and sister, uncle and niece, stepfather and stepdaughter, aunt and nephew, stepson and widowed stepmother, etc. Besides these restrictions, it is considered unethical to marry one's daughter to an infidel, a Chinese, a Tibetan, a Hindu, or a Mongol.

563
584 Matchmaking is a necessary prelude to marriage. The matches are usually concluded by the parents while the individuals concerned have little to say in the issue. It is not uncommon for parents to arrange their children's marriage before they reach marriage age or even soon after they are born. Next to the parents, the matchmakers play the most important role in the conclusion of a marriage. In some places the matchmakers are close male relatives of the bridegroom's father; in others, this role often is given to women, who engage in concluding deals of this kind.

The usual procedure is for the matchmakers, authorized by the father of the boy, to go to the prospective bride's parents to discuss the matter with her father. If they receive the consent of the girl's parents to consider the matter, they go back to the boy's father and inform him of the developments. He then sends a present of a sheep to the girl's house five or six days later, and comes with his family to discuss the gifts that his son is going to give the bride and arrangements for the wedding. The former
[583] issue usually involves much bargaining and disputing. The young man pays no actual bride-price for his wife, but he has to give her gifts consisting of clothing items and jewelry. The value of the presents often depends on the wealth and social status of the bridegroom's family. Once an agreement has been reached, the sheep is slaughtered for the occasion and the engagement of the couple is celebrated. The wedding gifts are brought to the bride's parents, and their acceptance is considered the final conclusion of the agreement.

563
585 If it is the first marriage of the girl importance is attached to the wedding ceremony. Her parents extend an invitation to a great many relatives and friends or, if rich, they may invite the whole village or the whole neighborhood to the celebration. The mullas, who will conduct the religious ceremony, are also present. The

/Nomadic Moslems of Sinkiang/

563 593 [369] [434] Children and parents relationships differ also. They are characterized by a much greater economic interdependence. The children of the city-dwellers have a certain degree of economic independence, and have a small income of their own at an early age, but no opportunity of the sort presents itself to the nomadic children. [868] The sons help their fathers and learn from them how to manage the livestock, how to shoot and hunt, how to bargain and sell, etc... they remain attached to their families even after marriage, having no separate property of their own.

[868] The daughters have much to learn from their mothers, in preparation for the many responsibilities that they will have in the future, and their help around the house is extremely valuable and necessary. A daughter, however, does not retain her relationship with her family after she is married, but shifts her allegiance to her husband's family.

563 592 In the nomadic society, families constitute definite units of production. This is the basis for their unity and close cooperation. It is almost impossible for a couple to get along without the help of their children and it is rare that their children would be able to become economically independent. Moreover, the family framework provides for the educational, religious, and social needs for the individuals comprising it.

B. Marriage and Divorce Customs

563 184 562 583 [586] Among the Turkis of the plains, for example at Kashgar, women are at a discount, wives are cheap and divorces even cheaper. Among the mountain people (particularly among the Kirghiz) however, girls are at a premium and the would-be-bridegroom or his father has to pay a heavy brideprice, which usually amounts to ten to thirty yaks or their equivalent in other kinds of livestock. When a boy has reached the age of six or seven and therefore may be 563 584 expected to survive until manhood, his parents ordinarily betroth him to a neighbor's daughter of similar age. This betrothal is known as the qalam. [583] The female relatives of both parties play a leading part in the lengthy haggling about the brideprice which precedes it.

563 585 When all yaks have been paid, and the young people have reached the age of fourteen and sixteen years respectively, the bride's people invite all the neighbors to a feast at which the marriage is announced. The bride and bridegroom remain in their tents in the background and do not attend. The feast and announcement, known as the nikah, constitute the wedding, there being no other ceremony. However, the bridegroom cannot yet take his bride to his own home. She continues to live with her parents for a period of two to five months, during which the latter make and furnish an aq-oi (tent with its felts, rugs, wall hangings, screens, pots, pans, milk bowls, and other necessary items. The bridegroom continues

/The Kirghiz/

563 When a Kirghiz travels, he brings along a few balls of qurut and
262 supplements them with wild rhubarb and celery which he finds
[484] on the mountainsides.

Bread is made in solid lumps leavened with sour milk. The
[735] poor cannot afford bread. They eat large quantities of mash. Meat is a luxury. A sheep is killed only on an important occasion, but when the hunter is successful his family enjoys game meat.

c. Clothing

563 The people dress in keeping with the severity of the climate.
291 Men wear long coats padded with cotton-wool. Trousers are also padded, and tucked into the leather knee-boots. Fur caps are pulled down over the ears to protect them from the bitter cold. Leather slippers are worn inside the boots, and the boots are removed when one enters the tent.

Women's dress is similar to that of the men, except for the headgear. The women's headdress is a large turban of muslin or similar cloth, nine to twelve inches high and of corresponding thickness. For dress, men wear embroidered skullcaps surmounted by sheepskin hoods lined with wool. They also sometimes wear a conical hat with two slits at the bottom to allow the brim to turn up.

3. Custom

563 Girls are at a premium in Kirghiz society, and the father of
583 a would-be bridegroom has to pay a handsome price for the
562 bride in money or its equivalent in livestock (thirty to three hundred sheep and two to thirty camels). Parents betroth their
563 son when he reaches the age of six or seven, to some neighbor's
584 daughter of about the same age. A bride price is then settled by
583 women relatives of both families. The boy's father pays a first annual installment, and the girl's father gives the boy a shirt or coat as a token of the betrothal. Then the marriage contract is complete. If for any reason the contract is broken, the in-
563 stallments paid are refunded. When the agreed amount has been
585 paid in full and the bride and groom have reached the proper
[582] age (fourteen for girls, sixteen for boys), the boy's parents invite all the neighbors to a feast and announce the marriage. The bride and groom do not attend the feast, but remain in their tents all day. There is no ceremony. The feast and announcement, known as the Nikah, constitute the wedding.

563 The bridegroom is not yet allowed to take his bride away
585 from her home. She continues to live with her parents for two
591 to five months, during which time her parents make and furnish a tent (aq-ai) for them. Meanwhile the boy remains at home, if it is nearby, or in a tent lent him by the girl's parents. He may
[606] go every seven or ten days and stay with the girl in her tent, but the visits must be kept secret from her father. If he appears before his father-in-law, it must be as a stranger.

/The New Uighurs/

000 can marry easily, and divorce their wives even more easily. A
563 farmer seldom has more than one wife, but a city man usually
[595] has at least two, living in different parts of town. The marriage
[369] age for girls is twelve to fourteen; for boys, fifteen to sixteen.
[582] Matches are arranged by parents, and often the children have
[584] known and played with each other for years. Ceremonies are
563 performed at the girl's first marriage. Her parents invite all
585 their neighbors to a feast, at which the leaders of the mosque
are also present. Together the bride and bridegroom eat some
bread dipped in salt water. Customarily the bride and her
[152] mother weep and wail aloud during the ceremony. The mullahs
are paid a fee for performing the rites, and food and money are
given to beggars. All expenses are paid by the bride's family.
The only liability incurred by the bridegroom is the hagg-i-mihr,
a settlement for his wife. Theoretically the wife can claim this
settlement at any time before her death, but it is never claimed
except at divorce, and occasionally this old tradition is omitted.

A procession of musicians accompanies the bride, who rides a pony or donkey or walks in front of the others from the home of her parents to the home of her husband. When she arrives at her new home, she is lifted over the threshold by her husband and his relatives.

[556] Several days after the wedding, the bride's family, if wealthy, gives one party for the men of the two families, and one for the women.

b. Coming of age

563 Women do not reach their full social status until they are
562 thirty or older, when they attain the dignity of jawanlik. A
885 woman who has reached this age of discretion is called a jawan,
[302] and is privileged to braid her hair in two long plaits.

This coming of age is celebrated by a feast known as jawanlik toi, given by the husband. For the first time the woman appears with her braids, and wearing a special shirt known as the jawan-chi konglak. After this celebration she is more important in the home and commands more respect from others. She is also
[581] worth more on the marriage market, as the younger bride has a tendency to run back to her parents. A New Uighur man would rather obligate himself heavily to marry a good-looking jawan than to take a young girl. The word jawan can always be found
[533] in their love songs, as in the following example:
[539]

"Who is it who knows what health is worth?
Not the healthy man who has never been ill.
What woman is it that knows worth in a man?
Not the girl who has never been a jawan." (Skrine 1926:203)

c. Remarriage

563 Remarriage is not condemned in New Uighur society. The
587 average man is a lazy, good-natured, easy-going and rather